

Amendment to the Specification:

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 1, line 2, of the specification as follows:

This application contains subject matter related to subject matter disclosed in co-pending, commonly assigned U.S. patent applications Serial No. _____, filed on _____ (~~Attorney Docket No. 50103-527~~); Serial No. _____, filed on _____ (~~Attorney Docket No. 50103-547~~); and Serial No. _____, filed on _____ (~~Attorney Docket No. 50103-551~~) 10/663,698, filed on September 17, 2003; Serial No. 10/704,746, filed on November 12, 2003; and Serial No. 10/704,593, filed on November 12, 2003.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 5, line 9, of the specification as follows:

Co-pending, commonly assigned U.S. patent application Serial No. _____, filed on _____ (~~Attorney Docket No. 50103-527~~) 10/663,698, filed on September 17, 2003, discloses a method for performing surface oxidation of media precursors in a continuous manner by utilizing a manufacturing apparatus comprising a dedicated oxidation treatment chamber or station positioned between the consecutively arranged chambers or stations for sequential deposition of the magnetic recording layer and the protective overcoat layer. According to the invention disclosed therein, the dedicated oxidation chamber or station is supplied with oxygen (O₂) gas admixed with an inert carrier gas, at a sub-atmospheric pressure and at ambient (i.e., room) temperature, such that oxidation of the surface of the magnetic recording layer occurs during the interval in which the media precursor transits the chamber at a transport rate consistent with the transport rate through the other processing chambers or stations of the manufacturing apparatus.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 5, line 22, of the specification as follows:

Co-pending, commonly assigned U.S. patent application Serial No. _____, filed on _____ (~~Attorney Docket No. 50103-547~~) 10/704,746, filed on November 12, 2003, discloses another method for performing surface oxidation of media precursors in a continuous manner, utilizing a manufacturing apparatus comprising a dedicated treatment chamber or station for performing thermally-assisted oxidation of the surface of the magnetic recording layer, positioned between the consecutively arranged chambers or stations for sequential deposition of the magnetic recording layer and the protective overcoat layer. According to the invention disclosed therein, the dedicated thermally-assisted oxidation chamber or station is supplied with oxygen (O₂) gas and includes heating means for maintaining the media precursors at an elevated temperature during treatment therein, such that oxidation of the surface of the magnetic recording layer is facilitated during the treatment interval in which the media precursor transits the chamber at a transport rate consistent with the transport rate through the other processing chambers or stations of the manufacturing apparatus.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 8, of the specification as follows:

Co-pending, commonly assigned U.S. patent application Serial No. _____, filed on _____ (~~Attorney Docket No. 50103-551~~) 10/704,593, filed on November 12, 2003, discloses yet another method for performing surface oxidation of media precursors in a continuous manner, utilizing a manufacturing apparatus comprising a dedicated treatment chamber or station for performing plasma-assisted oxidation of the surface of the magnetic recording layer, positioned between the consecutively arranged chambers or stations for sequential deposition of the magnetic recording layer and the protective overcoat layer. According to the invention disclosed therein, the dedicated plasma-assisted oxidation chamber or

station is supplied with oxygen (O₂) gas and includes means for creating a plasma comprising ionized oxygen species, whereby oxidation of the surface of the magnetic recording layer is facilitated during the treatment interval in which the media precursor transits the chamber at a transport rate consistent with the transport rate through the other processing chambers or stations of the manufacturing apparatus.